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WAYNE!
I CAN'T
BELIEVE IT!

YOU
THINK YOU KNOW
SOMEBODY--!

HE'S LETTING
DOWN THE HUMAN
RACE.

THE BLACK RING

PART
EIGHT

paul cornell writer pete woods artist brad anderson colorist
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superman created by jerry siegel & joe shuster

BORN IN SMALLVILLE
BUT BELIEVING HIMSELF
SUPERIOR, HE MURDERED HIS
FATHER TO ESCAPE SMALLTOWN AMERICA
AND BUILT AN EMPIRE ON HIS GENIUS.
THE SWORN ENEMY OF SUPERMAN, HE HAS
VOWED THAT THE WORLD WILL TURN ITS
BACK ON THE MAN OF STEEL AND INSTEAD
EMBRACE HUMANITY'S CHAMPION...
AND FUTURE RULER.

Lex Luthor



BUT...
IT DOESN'T
MATTER.

SOON NOTHING WILL
MATTER. THE PLAN TO STOP
ANY INTERFERENCE IS
IN MOTION...

MR.
LUTHOR!

I GOT A REPLY
REGARDING SOME
INQUIRIES I'VE BEEN
MAKING--

NOT NOW.
HE'S THINKING.

DAMN IT,
MACHINE--



--HE **NEEDS**
TO KNOW THIS!
ESPECIALLY GIVEN
HOW **BIZARRE** THIS
LATEST SPHERE
LOCATION IS.

THOSE NEWS
STORIES AND
SCIENCE ARTICLES
THAT MOTIVATED
HIM TO GO ON
THIS QUEST--*

--A LOT
OF THEM SEEM
TO HAVE BEEN
PLANTED--!

*IN ACTION COMICS #890.
--Media-Savvy Matt.



OKAY, THAT'S
WORRYING.
BUT TELL HIM
AFTER.

HE'LL NEED ALL HIS
CONCENTRATION
NOW.



IT'S NOT
OFTEN--

"...YOU HAVE TO
INTERROGATE YOUR
POLAR OPPOSITE."

JOKER.

LUTHOR.

HEY,
YOU GOT A
HAIRCUT.

MAKING
JOKES.
EXCELLENT.

WE'VE
DISABLED THE
CAMERAS. WE
CAN TALK
PRIVATELY.

MY ASSOCIATES
AND I HAVE A FEW
QUESTIONS.

ABOUT A CERTAIN...
ANOMALY. I'M SURE
YOU KNOW WHAT I'M
TALKING ABOUT.

JAZZ
HANDS!

HAHA HAHAHA!



"ASSOCIATES"! "PRIVATELY"!

AND PLEASE, THOSE CAMERAS ARE DIFFERENTLY ABLED.



I SEE YOU'VE GOT THE PRESS ON YOUR SIDE.

OH, SNAP! SHE'S GOT THE POWER!



JOKER, PLEASE--

--SOMEWHERE UNDER ALL THIS "MADNESS," REAL OR ASSUMED--

YOU KNOW WHAT?

I THINK IF I CAN JUST KILL BATMAN, I'LL SAVE THE WORLD!

INTERESTING. A DELUSION AKIN TO MY OWN CERTAINTY THAT--



--OH.



HAHAHAHA!

OH, THE RICH AND POWERFUL!

TAKES THEM A WHILE TO GET THEY'RE BEING LAUGHED AT!



CRACK!



--THERE
IS A GAME TO
BE PLAYED
HERE.

AND WE **MUST**
ALLOW YOU YOUR
DELUSION THAT THE
UNIVERSE IS **RATIONAL**.
THAT **BARGAINS**
CAN BE MADE.

SIT.

I KNOW
WHAT YOUR
QUESTIONS ARE
GOING TO BE.

BUT I KNOW
YOU'RE GOING
TO ASK THEM
ANYWAY.

WE KNOW THAT
SOMEHOW THERE'S AN...
UNUSUAL ENERGY SOURCE
IN THIS CELL. WE CALL IT
A **BLACK SPHERE**.

OH,
GOOD NAME.
IF YOU **NAME** IT,
YOU **CONTROL**
IT. THAT'S
SCIENCE.

ONE: A **BLACK SPHERE** WOULD
NORMALLY **FILL**
THIS CELL. HOW CAN
IT BE **IN** HERE?

TWO:
WHY CAN'T
WE **SEE** IT?

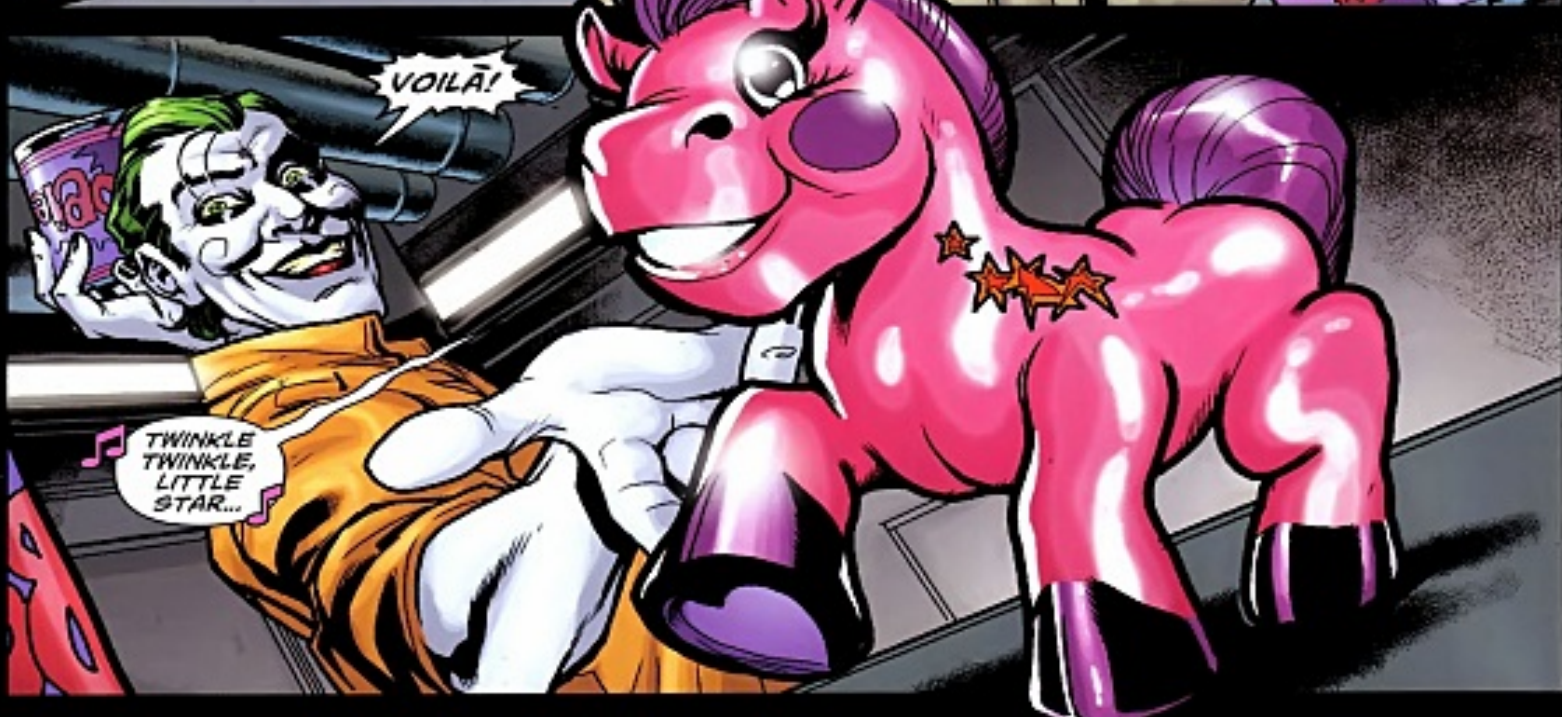
AND, THREE:
WHY DOES IT JUST
HAPPEN TO BE **IN**
HERE WITH YOU?

Heh heh
heh --

ONE:
HOW LONG IS
A **PIECE** OF
STRING?

TWO:
WHEN IS
A **DOOR** NOT
A **DOOR**?

THREE:
WHY DID THE
HYPNOTIST HAVE
A **FORK** STUCK
TO HIS **HEAD**?





I THOUGHT
THAT MIGHT
DO IT.

WHAT'S ALL
THIS--?

GACK.

IT TOOK ME AGES TO
CONVINCE THE GUARDS
TO GET ME ONE
OF THESE.

I WORRIED
THAT YOU MIGHT
ARRIVE BEFORE
IT DID.

BECAUSE
I KNEW YOU
WOULD
ARRIVE.

IT'S ALL
DOWN
TO--

--THIS LITTLE
BEAUTY.

MY KIND OF
KNICKKNACK.

I FEEL ITS
MERE PRESENCE
IS HURTING
SOMETHING.

BUT--phew-- I'M
GLAD IT MADE ITSELF
THAT SMALL.

SOME OF THE
PLACES I'VE HAD
TO HIDE IT--

YOU CAN
TOUCH THE
SPHERE?

WHAT, YOU
HAVEN'T?

NOT BEFORE OR AFTER,
WE HAVEN'T DONE ENOUGH
RESEARCH INTO--

THAT'S A
BLACK
SPHERE ALL
RIGHT.

I'LL
SAMPLE IT AND
CHANGE ITS--





--MY ONLY
"FREEDOM"--

--WOULD BE
TO FEEL LIKE
YOU.

LIKE THE
WORLD COULD
BE MADE
RIGHT.



THE WORLD
CAN BE MADE
RIGHT.

I'M
NEARLY
THERE.

LIKE
CHAOS NEVER
HAPPENED.

WHAT A
RENAISSANCE
MAN YOU ARE.



I KNOW THAT
IF THE UNIVERSE
IS MEANINGLESS...
THAT'S A JOKE AT
OUR EXPENSE.

IF IT'S
MEANINGFUL...
A DIFFERENT
JOKE.

ANY MEANING
WE MAKE
OURSELVES--

--THAT'S US
PRETENDING WE'RE
IN ON IT.



BUT LISTEN
TO ME, GOING ON
AND ON--!

--WHEN YOU
WANTED TO
HEAR ABOUT
THE PONY!



DON'T KNOW IF YOU'VE NOTICED, BUT I'M A BIT OF AN ARCHETYPE.

CONSCIOUSLY SO.

I DON'T SLEEP MUCH. I LET MY MINDS DRIFT, ON THE EMOTIONS UNDER EXISTENCE.

AND IT TURNS OUT ARCHETYPES... ATTRACT.

BECAUSE OF THE HUGENESS OF MY NEGATIVE EMOTIONS, MY INTERNAL MELODRAMA...

OH, THE THINGS THAT COME TO VISIT ME!



I JUST WOKE UP ONE DAY AND THERE THIS WAS. I THINK MY FEELINGS BROUGHT IT HERE. SOME PEOPLE MIGHT BE AFFECTED BY LONG EXPOSURE, EVEN AT THAT SIZE--

--I'M IMMUNE.

REMEMBER I MENTIONED A DOOR?



THIS IS ITS KEYHOLE.

AND THROUGH THAT KEYHOLE--

--ONE CAN HEAR WHISPERS.

VOICES FROM EVERYWHERE.

I THINK MY NEEDS GOVERN WHAT I HEAR OF THOSE.

THAT'S HOW I HEARD YOU TALKING TO...YOU KNOW, HER.

THE BIG TEASER. SHE IGNORES ALL THE GIFTS I SEND.

BUT I DON'T THINK THE POWER KNOWS ABOUT THE WHISPERS. THEY'RE JUST A SIDE EFFECT OF WHATEVER IT'S DOING.

THE "POWER"?

LEX, HE'S JUST TRYING TO CONFUSE YOU--

QUIET!

THE POWER IS WHAT'S BEHIND THE DOOR. I CAN FEEL IT.

ALL I KNOW IS, IT'S REAL, LIKE GOD.

BUT WORTHY OF RESPECT.

THAT'S THE WHOLE ENCHILADA.

DID I ENTERTAIN?

YES. YES, YOU DID.

YOU'VE CONFIRMED A NUMBER OF MY HYPOTHESES--

--WHAT
IS IT YOU
WANT?

I WANT YOU
TO INCREASE
THE SIZE OF THE
SPHERE.

MY NEED TO HIDE IT
MADE IT SMALL. BUT GOING
THE OTHER WAY SEEMS
TO TAKE MORE THAN
PERSONALITY.

THEN I CAN
USE IT AS A DOOR
OF MY OWN. OR
AT LEAST SNEAK
THROUGH A
CRACK.

THERE
ARE PEOPLE IN
GOTHAM THAT
NEED KILLING.

WE MIGHT FIND
OUT SOMETHING
USEFUL.

SIR, WE KNOW THE
PARAMETERS, BUT
EVEN SO--!

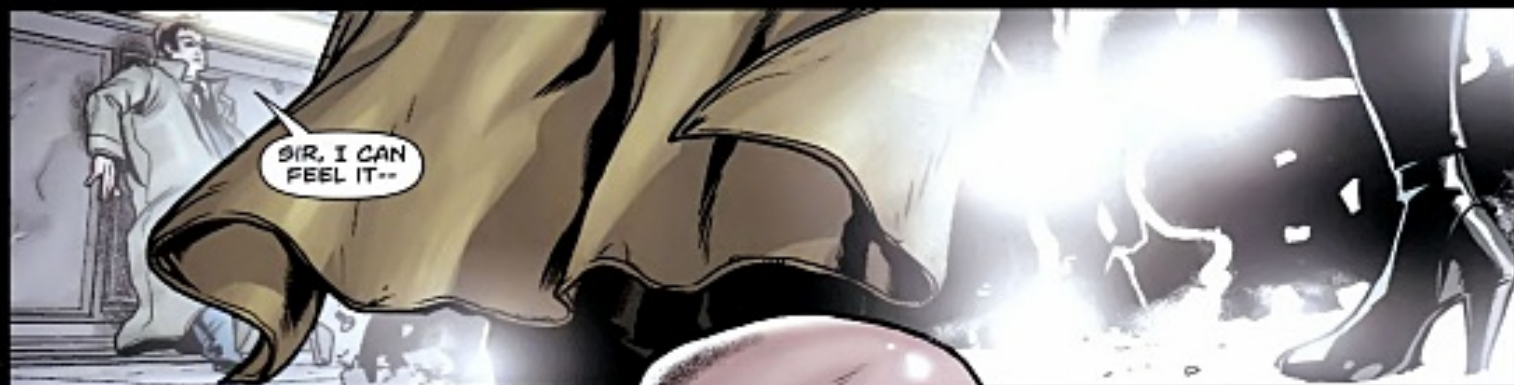
DO IT.

SENDING ENERGY
INTO THE SPHERE.
NOW.

HUMMMMMMM

HUMMMMMMM





SIR, I CAN
FEEL IT--



--FEEL
IT--!

HOLD ON,
SPALDING.

GOODNIGHT,
GRACIE!



OH.



OH NO!

I HEARD
IT ALL! IN A
SECOND! AND
IT COULD BE
TERRIBLE!

IF THAT'S
WHAT'S GOING
TO HAPPEN, I'M
HAPPIER IN
HERE!



CHANGE
IT!

QUICKLY!











I HAVE A
QUESTION FOR
HUMANS.

WHERE
IS THE HAIRLESS
LEX LUTHOR?

HE IS
LOOKING FOR
SOMETHING
I NEED.

THEBES
SECURITY

NEXT: LARFLEEZE
AND THE PITH
OF THE ORANGE

ACTION
COMICS

**The official tie-in to the
DC Universe Online game from
Sony Online Entertainment!**

DC UNIVERSE ONLINE LEGENDS



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DC UNIVERSE ONLINE #1 LEGENDS SPECIAL SNEAK PREVIEW

AND SO FALLS THE ONCE GREAT SAVIOR, THE ALIEN WHO PROUDLY SHOUTED TO ONE AND ALL: I'M NOT A HUMAN BEING LIKE YOU.

OH, NO... HE CALLED HIMSELF A SUPER MAN, AND HE WORE A BRIGHT RED AND BLUE UNIFORM, DECLARING THAT HE WAS BETTER THAN US.

SO HOW DO YOU FEEL NOW, ALIEN?

BEATEN... BY A MERE MAN.

UNSH... NO... YOU'VE LOST... EVERYTHING.

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Special thanks to **John Morgan**
and **Dana Kurtin**








IDIOT. YOU NEVER UNDERSTOOD. IT DOESN'T MATTER HOW MANY LIVE...

...AS LONG AS HE DIES.

NOW THE EARTH IS MINE.



AND HE'S FINALLY LEARNED HE'S NO BETTER THAN US.



HE COULD NEVER BE BETTER THAN...



...ME.





MY GOD.



BRAINIAC'S
SHIPS...



...UNLEASHING
HIS EXOBYTES...



BUT HE
PROMISED...
HE SWORE...

...ONCE THE HEROES
WERE DESTROYED,
THE WORLD WOULD
BELONG TO ME.



TO BE CONTINUED IN:
DC UNIVERSE
ONLINE #1
LEGENDS
IN STORES BIWEEKLY/
STARTING FEBRUARY, 2011



HEY DC NATION!

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Letters to the Editor

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Unpublished letters will not be returned or acknowledged. Published letters may identify the writer by first name, hometown, state or country.

The Reign Of Doomsday IS HERE!



Greetings, DC Nation. By now most of you have seen the beginning of the Reign of Doomsday storyline in this month's STEEL #1. This epic beat down was just the beginning of a six-part crossover, and there are tons of questions needing to be answered. Why is Doomsday back? Why is he targeting the other heroes and villains from the original Reign of the Supermen story? Where did he take Steel? We do know that his next target is appearing in next month's issue of THE

OUTSIDERS, and I'm pretty sure the image on this page spells trouble for Superboy. This story is heading somewhere big for the Superman universe and even has a top-secret final issue. Be sure to check out The Source blog (dcblog.com) for more information and keep your eyes peeled — you never know where Doomsday may strike next!

The Reign of Doomsday appears in the following issues:

Part 1: STEEL #1
Part 2: THE OUTSIDERS #37
Part 3: JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA #55
Part 4: SUPERMAN/BATMAN ANNUAL #5
Part 5: SUPERBOY #6
Part 6: ????

Be seeing you —

Ian Sattler

DC NATION

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